

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BERN 03125 01 OF 02 291807Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BERN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3125
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BERN 3125

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINR, SZ
SUBJ: MEETING WITH SWISS FEDERAL COUNCILOR AUBERT

1. SUMMARY. I HOSTED LUNCH MEETING JUNE 27 FOR FEDERAL COUNCILOR PIERRE AUBERT (FONMIN) AND FED POLITICAL DEPT SECY GEN ALBERT WEITNAUER. SWISS CONTRASTED SOVIET ATTACHMENT TO DETENTE WITH SOVIET MILITARY BUILDUP; APPLAUDED PRESIDENT CARTER'S ANNAPOLIS SPEECH; NOTED SOVIET CONCERN WITH CHINA AND CHINESE FEARS WAR INEVITABLE WITH USSR. AUBERT SAID CERTAIN TECHNOLOGY TRANSFERS TO USSR COULD HELP DECREASE TENSION BY RAISING LIVING STANDARDS. SAID EUROPEAN DISUNITY HINDERS CSCE PROGRESS. EXPRESSED INTEREST IN US ECONOMY. OFFERED HELP PROMOTE MIDDLE EAST PEACE. DESIRES VISIT US. END SUMMARY.

2. I OUTLINED FOR AUBERT HOW WE VIEW SOVIET/US RELATIONS (DRAWING ON SECRETARY'S PRESENTATION IN LONDON TO CHIEFS OF MISSION MEETING); STRESSED STRONGLY US PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL REACTION TO SOVIET/CUBAN ADVENTURES IN AFRICA. AUBERT, SPEAKING PERSONALLY, SAID HE SHARED US ASSESSMENT OF SOVIET POLICY; APPLAUDED STRONG US REACTION
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PAGE 02 BERN 03125 01 OF 02 291807Z

TO SOVIET MOVES IN AFRICA; SWISS AND EUROPEANS RELIEVED US HAD RESPONDED. AFRICAN AMBASSADORS HAD TOLD AUBERT THEY CONCERNED ABOUT SOVIET MOVES IN AFRICA. AUBERT FELT WORLD OPINION REACTS MORE READILY WHEN SOVIET MOVES ARE BLATANT THAN CLANDESTINE. WELCOMED RESTRAINED FIRMNESS OF PRESIDENT'S ANAPOLIS SPEECH WHICH HE CONSIDERED MORE TIMELY.

3. WEITNAUER, WHO RECENTLY VISITED MOSCOW (AND WAS THERE WHEN PRESIDENT MADE SPEECH), SAID SOVIETS ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO DETENTE. SOVIET INTERLOCUTORS EXPRESSED GREAT CONCERN OVER SPEECH. SAID DETENTE PROMOTED BY BREZHNEV SUPPORTED BY MANY YOUNGER SOVIET OFFICIALS; FUTURE OF DETENTE MIGHT BE IN DOUBT IF BREZHNEV LEFT OFFICE. AUBERT LESS SANGUINE ABOUT SOVIET INTENTIONS; HIS VIEW THAT EUROPEANS, INCLUDING SWISS, WOULD HAVE FALLEN UNDER SOVIET INFLUENCE LONG AGO WERE IT NOT FOR US PROTECTION. CONTRASTED SOVIET PROFESSION OF DESIRE PROMOTE DETENTE WITH CONTINUED ARMS BUILDUP VIS-A-VIS NATO THOUGH SOVIET FORCES ALREADY AT SUPERIOR LEVELS. WEITNAUER VIEWED SOVIETS POLITICALLY, MORALLY AND ECONOMICALLY WEAKER THAN WEST; SOVIETS REACT MILITARILY TO SHOW STRENGTH, THOUGH ARMS BUILDUP INCREASINGLY BURDENS ECONOMIC CAPACITY. SAID RUSSIANS HISTORICALLY FOLLOWED DEFENSIVE POLICY; RARELY ATTACKED; BUT PURSUED IMPERIALIST EXPANSIONALRY POLICY WHEN NO RESISTANCE ENCOUNTERED. SAID SOVIETS ONLY UNDERSTAND STRONG LANGUAGE; URGED FIRM US POLICY. BELIEVED RUSSIANS AND GERMANS HISTORICALLY HAVE MANY COMMON INTERESTS; SAW SIGNIFICANCE IN BREZHNEV'S BONN VISIT.

4. ON DISARMAMENT, AUBERT RESTATED SWISS VIEW THAT OFFENSIVE ARMS SHOULD BE FIRST PRIORITY OF DISARMAMENT. CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BERN 03125 01 OF 02 291807Z

STRESSED SWISS HAVE ONLY DEFENSIVE POSTURE IN ARMED NEUTRALITY. WEITNAUER NOTED SOVIET AMBASSADOR LAVROV TOLD SWISS THERE ARE "GOOD NEUTRALS AND OTHERS," STRESSED THAT AUSTRIA (MILITARILY WEAKER THAN SWITZERLAND) IS "GOOD NEUTRAL." AUBERT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT TECHNOLOGICAL EXPORTS COULD ENABLE SOVIETS INCREASE QUALITATIVE ARMS CAPABILITY. AUBERT'S VIEW THAT TECHNOLOGY EXPORTS COULD BE POSITIVE WHEN THEY INCREASE SOVIET STANDARD OF LIVING, GREATER PRIVATE OWNERSHIP AND SENSE OF INDEPENDENCE, BECAUSE THAT WOULD DIMINISH THREAT OF WAR.

5. AUBERT NOTED CHINESE MINISTER KU NU, WHO RECENTLY VISITED SWITZERLAND, REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED VIEW WAR WITH SOVIETS INEVITABLE. WEITNAUER SAID SOVIETS ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT CHINA; POTENTIAL CONFLICT IS SERIOUS CONCERN TO ALL. SAID SOME SOVIET GENERALS TEMPTED LAUNCH PRE-EMPTIVE ATTACK ON CHINA WHILE CHINA WEAKER THAN PERMIT CHINESE TIME BUILDUP QUALITATIVE ARMS CAPABILITIES. HOWEVER, SHEER SIZE OF CHINA IS ONE CAUSE FOR SOVIET HESITANCY.

6. AUBERT BRIEFLY MENTIONED MONTREUX MEETING ON SWISS

CSCE PROPOSAL FOR ARBITRATION OF INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS;
HOPED FOR GOOD RESULTS. SAID EUROPEAN DISUNITY IS MAJOR
ROADBLOCK TO CSCE PROGRESS. BELIEVED US VIEWS SIMILAR TO
SWISS ON CSCE ISSUES.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BERN 3125

7. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON US ECONOMY AND DOLLAR
OUTLOOK, I STRESSED IMPORTANCE RECENT VISIT TO SWITZERLAND
OF FRB CHAIRMAN MILLER. NOTED FRB AND USG POLICIES AIM
AT CONTROLLING INFLATION, REDUCING US TRADE AND BUDGET
DEFICITS. AUBERT STRESSED IMPORTANCE TO SWISS US FULFILL
OFFSET COMMITMENT ON F-5E TIGER PURCHASE. I EMPHASIZED US
EFFORTS TO DATE AND DETERMINATION TO THEIR
OBLIGATION.

8. AUGERT SUPPORTED US POLICY IN MIDDLE EAST. BELIEVED
ISRAEL REQUIRES REINFORCED US ASSURANCE, OR EVEN
GUARANTEE, FOR ITS SURVIVAL TO ENABLE ISRAELIS ACCEPT
ARAB PROPOSALS. URGED US CONTINUE SUPPORT SADAT'S PEACE
INITIATIVE TO KEEP IT FROM FALLING; BACKED US PLANE SALES
TO EGYPT. STRESSED SADAT'S RISKS TAKEN IN REMOVING EGYPT
FROM SOVIET INFLUENCE AND LAST NOVEMBER'S PEACE INITIATIVE.
EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT FUTURE EGYPTIAN POLICY IF SADAT'S
PEACE INITIATIVE FAILED. AUBERT PERSONALLY CONSIDERED
BEGIN'S POLICY TOO RIGID. SAID SWISS PREPARED ASSIST
WHenever CAN BE HELPFUL IN PROMOTING PEACE; COULD PLAY
NEUTRAL INTERMEDIARY MESSENGER ROLE; COULD HOST OFFICIAL
TALKS OR UNOFFICIAL CONTACTS IN DISCREET, QUIET SETTING
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PAGE 02 BERN 03125 02 OF 02 291812Z

IN SWITZERLAND.

9. COMMENT. AUBERT IMPRESSED ME AS TALENTED, ENERGETIC AND WELL-INFORMED NATIONAL LEADER BUT CONSTRAINED BY TRADITIONAL SWISS NEUTRALITY AND COLLEGIAL SYSTEM OF EXECUTIVE POLICYMAKING. HE IS OBVIOUSLY STILL LEARNING HIS JOB. HE PREFERS DIRECT, FRANK DISCUSSION; PERSONAL VIEWS PARALLEL THOSE OF US ON MANY ISSUES. HIS ATTITUDE GENUINELY FRIENDLY TO US; REPEATEDLY REFERRED TO IMPORTANCE OF US STRENGTH FOR INDEPENDENCE OF WEAKER NATIONS; VIEWED US AS "BIG ST BERNARD." AUBERT EXPRESSED DESIRE VISIT US WITH MUCH TIME FOR PRIVATE TRAVEL TO BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE. WARNER

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